

MEAT INDEED, AND DRINK INDEED

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A SERMON
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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON
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*“For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.”
John 6:55*

THE crowd had followed Jesus for the loaves and fishes. He gently upbraids them for being guided by so carnal an appetite, and impelled by so coarse a motive to follow Him. Then He tells them that there is a spiritual meat which is far better—a spiritual drink far richer than those aliments which nourish the body and gratify the animal tastes. After which, speaking of Himself spiritually, He says, “My flesh is meat indeed”—real meat, such as supports the soul, and “My blood is drink indeed”—real drink, the best, the truest beverage, such as invigorates the spirit for immortality.

Why, you may ask, on the outset, *does our Lord speak of His flesh and blood as separated?* I tried to explain that some time ago when we gathered around this table. There must be, in the Lord’s supper, bread and wine, but bread separated from the wine, as our Lord speaks of His flesh as separate from His blood, and this was to indicate that it is as a dying Savior that He is most precious to us.

The blood separated from the flesh indicates death. It is to the death of Jesus that the believer first turns His eye, and it is when considering the living, reigning Christ as having once been slain that our richest comfort comes to us. So it is not an unnecessary multiplication of words, or a vain repetition of the same idea, when our Lord says to us, “My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.” He thereby denotes Himself as the dying Christ.

Taking the words as they stand, our first point will be that—

I. THE FLESH OF CHRIST IS MEAT INDEED—SPIRITUAL MEAT.

The likeness is emphatic, it is “meat indeed.” It is like meat *because meat, or food, sustains the body.* The body could not be kept in vigor ordinarily, or without a miracle, except by the use of food. We pine, we languish, we sicken, we die without bread. So the soul without Jesus, supposing it to be alive, must soon sicken, pine, be famished, and decay.

You, O believer, with all your strength, would be weak as water at this moment if Jesus were not now your present support. All your past experience would go for nothing if you had not now a present Christ to stay your hopes upon. It would be only a matter of time with you, you would ere long sink into the corruption of an open apostasy. Like a man shut up in a dungeon and deprived of food, who drags out for a few days a most painful existence, and at the last, expires, and becomes carrion, so must it be with you.

Unless Jesus Christ be your daily meat, you would go back to the carnal elements of the world, and become corrupt and depraved as others are. Christ is the only true sustenance of the quickened soul. But, mark you, let a man eat what meat he may, it does not always so sustain him but that he is not sometimes weak and stretched upon the bed of languishing. It cannot so sustain him but that ere long he must be carried to his grave.

But if your souls learn to feed on Jesus, they shall enjoy the blessed immunity promised to the inhabitants of Zion, they shall not say, “I am sick,” they shall never die, they shall feed on this immortal bread such as angels eat. You shall be carried up to the seats of the immortals to dwell forever with the Christ upon whom you have fed, coming to Him first to appease your hunger, and believing on Him continuously to sustain your life.

Meat not only provides sustenance, but it *assists growth*. The child cannot develop into a man if he be denied his daily food, he must certainly die in infancy or in childhood if he is without the nutriment which is requisite to the building up of his bodily frame.

Now, brethren and sisters, we are babes in grace, many of us. We have been brought to Jesus' feet, and as such, we are of those who make up His kingdom, but we need to grow into spiritual manhood. We are not content with little faith, and dim hope, and a spark of love. We want to attain unto perfection in spiritual things—I mean to be perfectly developed men, strong in the fullness of spiritual energy, and this can only be by Christ. Only can you grow as you increase in the knowledge of Him, and in subjection to the influences of His indwelling Spirit.

As food makes our bodies grow, so Christ is food to our souls, He is “meat indeed,” for He makes us grow after a divine sort. Let a man feed upon what meat he may, he shall not come unto absolute perfection. But let him feed on Jesus and he shall. Through the grace of God in Christ Jesus we shall yet come to the fullness of the stature of men in Christ. Up there they are all men in Christ. Before the throne they are all perfect and without fault, and this because they have fed upon this sacred meat, which makes them grow until they come unto the perfect image of Him they feed upon.

Meat does not only sustain and cause growth, *but it makes up for the daily waste of the body*. Some people forget that every exertion of the body wears it away as truly as the machine spends its fuel and wastes itself. As even an engine of iron needs repair, so does this body of ours, and the meat we feed upon goes to repair the daily waste to which bone, and muscle, and nerve are all subjected. Beloved, Jesus Christ, in this sense, is meat. “He restoreth my soul.” He makes up for the waste of temptation, for the wear and tear of care, for the fret of trouble, for the fume and flurry of manifold anxieties, for every thing that would waste a man away.

My soul once again renews her strength, like the eagle when she sips from the brook that flows from the foot of the cross. Oh! believer, you will soon degenerate, this world of sin will soon make you backslide, and lose every good thing you have, unless you go to Christ continually, and feed on Him. But feeding on Him, the world shall not hurt you, temptations shall not wound you, your trials shall not overwhelm you, for you shall find His flesh to be meat indeed.

The best meat that man's body can receive will not always repair the waste. After a certain period of life, the body must decay, and the most nutritious diet cannot prevent the hair, the teeth, the eyes, the legs, the arms, the entire man, from discovering that the hour of prime has passed, and that the time of decay has arrived. Bend must the man and lean upon his staff, and eat or drink what he will, according to the strictest diet and regimen of the physician, yet still the time of waste has come. They that look out of the windows shall be darkened, the grinders shall fail because they are few, and the pillars of the house shall tremble.

But, beloved, *His* flesh is “meat indeed,” because they that feed upon Him shall still bring forth fruit in old age. They shall be fat and flourishing, to show that the Lord is upright. Their last days shall be their best days, and instead of declining, they shall gather strength with the multiplying years till the very moment when heart and flesh shall fail, and then shall be the instant when the strength of their souls and their portion forever shall be most fully revealed to them.

Moreover, *meat is a great remover of pain and disease*. Without meat, or without food of some kind, a man's inward constitution becomes full of gnawing and anguish. Bitter are the gripings of hunger. Perhaps no pain can be more severe, when a man is long exposed to it, than hunger, with the exception of thirst. No doubt want is the root of multitudes of the diseases of the poor. Generous diet often does more for the sick than the best medical prescriptions.

It is certainly so with believers in Christ. His flesh is meat indeed in this respect. The pains of conviction, the throbbings of a guilty conscience, all are stayed when a man gets Christ. If a man be spiritually sick with worldliness, with doubt, with pride, with envy, with anything that is the common sickness of the child of God, let him get but a hearty feast upon the flesh of Jesus, and the disease will fly. Christ puts such vigor into the spiritual system of His own people when they feed on Him, that it

drives out diseases as strong men cast them off by the very force of constitution. Blessed and happy is he who eats this flesh, for it is in this sense meat indeed.

Once more, meat is used constantly by us *for the development of strength*. The man ill-fed cannot lift the weights that another can who has more generous diet upon his table. Lowness of food brings littleness of strength. Now Jesus Christ is the only food that can make His people strong for service. Feed on Him and ye shall run and not be weary, ye shall walk and not faint. It is meat indeed, because it gives us strength that is all but boundless. It clothes a mortal man with the might of God. It makes the feeblest Christian in the church, when he has fed upon Christ, to be as a giant to suffer or to do.

I cannot enlarge upon all these points, though there is enough in any one of them for a discourse, but dear child of God, seek after Christ, and be not satisfied until daily you are fed and nourished upon Him.

The word "*indeed*" gives the sentence an air of strong protest. We must take this into consideration. Why does He say that His flesh is meat indeed? *It is in opposition to mere animal and corporeal food*, which is meat, but not meat indeed.

You think that bread is solid. So it is, speaking one way but what does it support? It supports the body, and the body, you say, is substantial. So indeed it is to the eye and to the touch, but what is the body? All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, and the flower thereof fadeth away, surely the people be grass. This body is so little a while here, and so soon dissolved, that I may safely call it but a shadow, and the food that feeds the shadow is but a shade.

And what is the soul within us? Why, that, you say, is unreal. Truly so, sirs, to smell, to sight, to touch, but not to real thought. The real thing about a man is his inward self, which you cannot see—his secret, impalpable, unseen, immortal self, that never dies. Time's tooth does not touch it, nor does the scythe of death cut it down. The soul is the real thing, not the body, and sirs, the food which feeds the soul is the real food after all, and though the men of the world turn on their heel and say, "Ah! no, the bread and cheese that we put into our mouth, that is the real thing, give us plenty of that." Sirs, 'tis the shadow, but the truth you give your souls to feed upon, that it is which in God's sight, in the sight of wise men, and in your sight, if you have any spiritual discernment, is meat indeed.

It is meat indeed, *in contrast with the typical meats of the Old Testament*. There was the Paschal Supper—surely that was a glorious feast, when by it the people went their way out of Egypt rejoicing. Yes, but 'twas only a deliverance from a common temporal slavery, but they that eat the Paschal Lamb are delivered from the bondage of death and hell, for His flesh is meat indeed.

In the wilderness they ate the manna. Yes, but every day it seemed to tell them its own unsubstantial character, from the fact that if they kept it till the next morning it bred worms and stank. But our Lord Jesus Christ is food that never corrupts. Feed on Him, lay Him up in your hearts, and you shall find no corruption there, nor shall you die.

In the old tabernacle and the temple there were the loaves of shewbread, and these were meat for the priest. Ah! but the shewbread was nothing but a type, and to the priest, however devoutly he might receive it, the shewbread, in itself, was no food for his real self, but only for his corporeal frame. And I may say the same of the bread which we have upon the table here tonight, there is nothing in it, it is a mere emblem and a sign. But Christ's flesh is meat indeed.

When I have sometimes seen this text put over the table commonly used for what is called the "Sacrament," I have trembled lest people should be led into the grievous and unnatural error of Transubstantiation. When our Lord said, "My flesh is meat indeed," He could not mean that bread on the table, for the Lord's supper was not then instituted. In this particular text, at any rate, there can be no allusion of any kind to what is called "the Mass" by some, or by others called "the Sacrament," because these things were not brought forward by our Lord until within a few hours of His death, and He is now speaking months before that time.

Beloved, the bread is bread, and nothing but bread, and so far as it points you, like a signpost, to the real flesh of Christ, so far so good. If you stop there, I can only say of it that bread is meat, but the flesh of Christ is meat indeed.

When our Lord says, “My flesh is meat *indeed*,” He clearly distinguishes it from *every other kind of soul meat*. There are many sorts of soul meat. Some men feed their souls on their own doings. “Oh!” they say, “we have prayed, we have fasted, we have given to the poor, we have been upright, we have been righteous,” and their soul feeds on that, though it is all wind. But if they trusted Christ, it would be meat indeed.

Some feed on ceremonies. They have been baptized, christened, confirmed, and I know not what besides. Fine confectionery this, but it is all wind. Christ received into the soul and trusted in for salvation, is meat indeed.

Some have grown up with false doctrines, or with true ones exaggerated, and these bring them to a very fine development of self-conceit and bigotry, but they make no solid food for the man’s mind. But oh! beloved, when a man can say, “My hope is in the Crucified alone, I look to Him every day, my meditations are on Him, my reading is much about Him, my prayers are sent to heaven all through Him, my praises are for Him, He is my soul’s great joy, comfort, strength, and help,” then he has got the meat indeed, he will be a strong man to overcome his sin, he will be a holy man, a happy man, a heavenly man, and by and by he shall be caught up to dwell where Jesus is, on whom he has fed.

I hope I have made this clear. It is thinking upon Jesus, trusting in Jesus, that is the eating, Jesus Himself being the food. Those who trust in Him and rest in Him have got the best of soul meat. They have got meat indeed.

II. CHRIST’S BLOOD IS DRINK INDEED.

Like drink to the body the blood of Jesus, that is to say, the merits of His atoning sacrifice, *sustains*. The body is not to be built up without some liquid, the system needs it. The soul is not to be sustained without considering and resting on the substitutionary suffering of Jesus. That Jesus died in my stead and suffered for my sin is to stimulate my hope, my comfort, my joy, in a word, my whole soul, just as drink invigorates the physical system.

Drink *refreshes* the body. The traveler is faint, it is a hot, burning day. That cool brook—how different the man looks when he laves his face in it, and drinks a sweet, cooling draught. And so the blood of Jesus refreshes the man who trusts in it. If I trust that Jesus was punished for me, and I am clear that Jesus died for me, how my soul seems to have got a new life, how it revives. Though he were dead, yet should he live who could believe in this. He who could trust in the precious blood, though despair held him in a fainting fit so that he could not stir hand or foot, yet if this precious doctrine of a Savior dying for him were believed by him, his heart and his spirit must revive at once.

Drink also *cleanses the body*. I do not mean washing, but that the reception of the water into the system flushes all the various departments of the frame, and no doubt the liquid always has upon the human body a healthy influence unless it be taken, however it may be, intemperately. It is, to a great extent, made life-fluid of the system.

Now, whenever you get Jesus Christ into the soul, how it seems to set the veins right if the blood be wrong! How it flushes out all impurities from the spiritual system, and the more really you come to rest upon a bleeding Christ, the more sure you are to get rid of your sins—I mean your reigning sins, your besetting sins, for we can overcome them only through the blood of the Lamb. Christ’s blood is thus drink indeed.

Drink also *cheers the man*. How many a faint heart has been cheered when the cooling draught has been brought, the fainting one has opened her eyes, and smiled. And oh! how the thoughts of a dying Christ revive the fainting soul and make the spirit sing that once was ready to moan and cry, “I am forgotten, I am forsaken, I am lost.”

Notice the word “*indeed*,” how it comes in again, “My blood is drink indeed,” *in opposition to all carnal drink*, for as I said about the food, that it is but a shadow to support a shadow, so it is with the drink—it is but a shade to support a shade. Christ’s blood supports the spirit, therefore, it is drink indeed.

How superior *to all typical drinks!* There was the water which flowed from the rock when it was smitten, there were the various drinks with the meat offerings, but Jesus Christ is the fullness of which these were but the shadows.

Christ says, “My blood is drink indeed,” as though utterly *ignoring all other soul drinks*. Some men drink until they are drenched with earthly pleasure. Others drink until they are inflated with their own self-righteousness. The devil has his cups, and he knows how to fill them to the brim, and make them sparkle and fascinate the eye. But let men’s souls drink of these draughts till they come to the dregs, they shall never be satisfied, and in the world to come their misery shall be greater if they have had any satisfaction here.

But oh! if your soul can get to the precious blood of Christ and rest there, and you can rejoice that Jesus died for you, you may drink, but you shall never be inebriated, you may drink, but you shall never know satiety, you may drink and you shall have a satisfaction which nothing can destroy, which time or habit cannot cause to pall on your palate, and of which eternity shall be but a blessed prolongation. Drink, thirsty soul, drink at the fountain of the Savior’s blood, and you shall thirst no more, but cry, “I have enough, I have found in Jesu’s atoning blood all that my soul can want.” Put these two things together.

It appears, according to the text, that—

III. OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST IS BOTH MEAT AND DRINK TOGETHER.

So I would have you notice *the suitability of Jesus Christ to man’s wants*. Man wants meat and drink. Jesus is what man wants. You want pardon, you have it in Christ. You want life, eternal life, you have it in Christ. You want peace, comfort, happiness, you have it all in Christ. No key ever fitted a lock as well as Christ fits a sinner. You are empty, Christ is full. You cannot have a want that He cannot supply. There never was, and there never will be, a soul that was past the power of Jesus.

Oh! what a suitable Savior He is to me! That I can say, for if Jesus Christ had been sent into this world for me only, He could not have suited me better than He does, and if He had been sent for you only, poor trembling sinner, He could not have fitted you better than He will. Why, when I think of Jesus, He seems to be all mine, and I am sure I cannot afford to do without a bit of Him. I want Him altogether, and He just exactly fills my soul up to the brim, and you shall find it is so to you. He will be your meat and your drink, and if you get Him you will say—

*“All my capacious powers could wish
In Thee doth richly meet;
Nor to my eyes is light so dear,
Nor friendship half so sweet.”*

If Jesus Christ be thus meat and drink together, what *fullness* there is in Him! He is not only one thing, and not only the other, but He is both. A man with meat would die, let him have as much as he pleased of it, if there were nothing to drink, a man with drink would die, if there were nothing solid for him to eat. Jesus does not give us part salvation, but He gives us all of it. You shall find in Jesus Christ everything that will be wanted between hell and heaven. All the way, from the gates of Gehenna to the pearly gates of paradise, every want of every pilgrim is met in Him.

Ten thousand time ten thousand as His people are, yet all of them receive all that they want from Him, for “It hath pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell.” “All fullness”—mark the word. “Fullness” is a big word, but “all” fullness is bigger, and all fullness dwells in Him—that is, it is remaining in Him, always fullness and always remaining all fullness, that is the greatest word of all. He is both meat and drink, He is all that we want.

Consider, too, that if Christ be both meat and drink, *what need we have of Him!* because there is no need in the world, I suppose, that is greater than the need of food, of meat and drink. You hear the cry of “Fire!” in the street, and it startles you, but those who have ever heard the cry of “Bread!” in a bread riot

say that the cry of “Fire!” is nothing to it. There is something so sharp, so awful, so determined, so ferocious, so like the yell of wild beasts, about men and women that scream for bread, that it is the most awful thing that is ever heard.

And “Drink!” What a word that must be for a number of poor wretches shut up as they were in the Black Hole of Calcutta, raving through those little windows at the guard outside for drink, and stretching out their hands and beseeching them to turn their carbines upon them, and shoot them, rather than let them die there a lingering death of suffocation and of thirst! How, when a little water was passed in, they fought and struggled for it, if so be a man might but get a drop, or suck a handkerchief that had been dipped into it, and linger on a little longer.

Now, nobody can have a greater want than an actual want of bread and want of water, but that is what you want, my dear friends. You want Christ, your soul wants this very bread and water. Think not that you are rich and increased in goods if you have not got Christ, for in truth you are naked, and poor, and miserable. If you do not trust Him, love Him, serve Him, your poor soul has not even a drop to drink. What can it do but die? And oh! what must be its wretchedness when your soul shall ask for a drop of water to cool its tongue, tormented in that flame? While others are feasting, you shall have the gnashing of your hungry teeth to be your endless portion. God grant you may not be so cruel to your souls as to starve them by going without Christ.

Aye, and if Christ be meat and drink, *what need there is of a real reception of Him*. If you get meat and drink, you cannot make any use of them unless you eat and drink them. Take meat to a hungry man, hold it out on your finger and ask him, “Don’t you feel better?” “No,” saith he. “Look at it, man, look at it.” “No, I feel more hungry.” “But cut it, here is the knife.” “Oh!” saith he, “what is the use of that? You mock me, I want to get it between my teeth, I want to get it worked into my system, or else it is of no use to me.”

Hearer, of what service is it to you that you come and listen, Sunday after Sunday, some of you, but never decide to trust Christ, and take Him into your soul? Why, you do but hear me, as it were, pour out the water, and you do not drink. You see it sparkle as I speak of it, but you do not receive it. What is the good of it to you? Oh! you will perish, some of you, you will perish with the bread within your reach, with the clean brook of eternal life flowing at your feet.

Oh! why this folly! It is not so in other things. Men are not satisfied with seeing gold, they want to take it home and put it in their pockets, and how is it that they are content with hearing about Christ—with talking about Christ—but never asking for real faith, and for vital union with the Lord Jesus Christ? See to this, I pray you, and see to it soon, or death will see to you.

Moreover, beloved, if Jesus Christ be both meat and drink, beloved in the Lord—I speak to you now—*what reason there is for giving thanks!* I said in the reading that a man is very unmannerly, very beastlike, who sits down to his meat and his drink without thanks. Well, then my soul, whenever you come to feed on Christ—whenever you think on Him—and that should be always—always give thanks. The true spirit of a Christian is perpetual thankfulness.

I like the remark of a dear friend who is present now, who, when the November fogs began, said to me on a Sunday morning, “I tell all my family to be more cheerful than ever now the dreary weather has come, so as to shake off all these things that are around by keeping up cheerfulness within.”

Now, you are always feeding on Christ, and so every time you feed you ought to give thanks, therefore, as you are always feeding on Christ, “rejoice in the LORD always, and again, I say, rejoice.” They used to call this supper, in the ancient church, as we sometimes do now, “the Eucharist”—the giving of thanks. Well, let the life of the Christian be a constant Eucharist, and as he feeds on Jesus always, let it always be with this tribute of praise, “Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.”

Yea, and if Jesus Christ be meat and drink, then *here is a reason why you Christians should be very earnest to tell of Him to others—to hand Him out*. Oh! if we had this house full of bread tonight, and there were a famine all over London, in the East End, the West End, and the North, and the South, and men were dropping down dead in the streets, and they were crowding outside there, out at the Elephant

and Castle and down Newington Causeway, I know what I should say, if the bread belonged to me, “Brethren and sisters, come and help me out of the windows with it! Let them come in at every door, let them crowd at every window, and let them have something to eat!” And if they were thirsty, and we had the mains laid on here, and there was no water to be had anywhere else, oh! I am sure there is not a little child here that would not be glad to take his little tin can and hand out a draught of water to the thirsty people.

Well, you then, with little abilities, who love Christ—tell about Him to others. He is meat and drink to the famished, thirsty ones. If He were merely a dainty, I could not press it, but as He is a very necessity to the dying sons of men, tell them about Him, and if they despise Him, well then you have done your part, but if they perish without your telling them of Christ, their blood may lie at your door.

Oh! bethink you, while you are going home tonight, walking down the streets, whether there is any house you pass where there is a man living who can charge you with having neglected him. Do not let it be so any longer, but do seek that, as His flesh is meat indeed, and His blood is drink indeed, you may hand out Jesus Christ to the famishing crowds, that they may be satisfied.

The Lord bless you richly, for His name’s sake.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

JOHN 6:41-66

Verses 41-44. *The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven? Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.*

Christ never retracted a truth or diminished its force because it was rejected, but He rather seemed to say, “You refused this truth. I knew you would. You need not murmur, you are none of Mine. If you had been, the Father would have drawn you. You will not come. So you are set against truth that you cannot see it. So blind are your eyes that you do not behold it. No man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent Me, draws him.”

45. *It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.*

Beware, dear friends, of any learning of Christ, except by divine teaching, for what we learn merely from the lips of our fellow men will never be vitally learned or really understood. We must be all taught of God, and so we shall be if, indeed, we be among those whom the Father draws towards Christ. All His teachings draw that way, and when they are taught into the inner man—not so much to the mind as to the soul and heart—then do we know the truth indeed.

46-47. *Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.*

One of the richest passages surely of all Holy Scripture. It is all marrow and fatness, but here you seem to have the quintessence. We have eternal life if we are believers—not *shall* have it, but have it now. We have a life which is eternal. It is idle to talk of our losing it, because it would not be eternal if we did. We have a life within us which can by no possibility ever die, but must live on forever. “He that believeth on me, though he hath many tremblings—though he may be the subject of many infirmities, yet he that believeth on me hath everlasting life.” O my soul, exult in that glorious truth. You have everlasting life as surely as you have faith in Christ.

48. *I am that bread of life.*

The food on which that everlasting life lives—living bread for living souls. O brethren, the dead letter is of no use to us. All the truth in the world, unless it be quickening, cannot feed our quickened natures. It is incarnate truth, even Christ that we must feed upon. “I am that bread of life.”

49-50. *Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.*

For that manna of theirs was corruptible. We read that it bred worms and stank, and though it was as angels’ food for a time, yet it was but temporary. It only fed a temporary life, and like that life, it passed away. But Jesus Christ is incorruptible, and they that live on Him live on incorruptible food, which nourishes the incorruptible seed which lives and abides forever.

51-52. *I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?*

They misunderstood the Master. They tarried in the letter, and did not reach to the spirit—the meaning, and that letter killed them, for “the letter killeth: the spirit giveth life.” The inward meaning is that on which the soul feeds. And so the unhappy Romanist believes that he can literally eat the flesh of Christ, which, if it were true, were monstrous and could be of no service to him. Of what value is one flesh more than another flesh, if it is carnally to be considered? He loses the inner meaning. Blessed are they who are drawn of the Father and taught of the Lord—who spy out what is, after all, so little concealed beneath the thin veil of the metaphor.

53. *Then Jesus said unto them,—*

What? Do you think He explained it? No, He did not explain to these Jews. They were given up to judicial blindness. They had so long refused to see, that now they must not see, for on them was come the curse that, seeing they should not see, and hearing they should not perceive. Oh! how terrible this is when this falls on a man, and I think I know some upon whom it must have fallen. They have indulged the philosophical vein, always spiritualizing and cutting out the soul of truth, and they are given up to spiritualizing as many of the great German philosophers evidently have been, who cannot now receive a plain statement, however simple are the words, but from their natural habit of continually twisting and tearing to pieces, they do so with everything, and a man may be an unbeliever so long that it will never be given to him to be a believer again.

God grant we may never make scales for our own eyes, and so plug up the soul’s mental vision with the miry clay of sin, that henceforth, even though the eternal Christ flash the divine truth into our eyes, we shall only be dazzled by it into a greater darkness.

So it was with these men. Jesus did not explain to them. He just repeated the truth more emphatically, and made it more offensive to them than before. May a preacher sometimes be offensive in his preaching? He must be. He must sometimes feel that such a truth will only move men’s wrath if he preach it. Nevertheless, we are not to put truth to the verdict of a jury, neither is truth to be submitted to what is called the “inner consciousness” of a set of sinners whose consciousness is all defiled. As well make a company of highwaymen a jury about theft, as make unconverted men to be a jury about what is truth. It cannot be. Christ does not condescend to that. He tells them the truth more fully and more offensively than before.

53. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood,—*

Which He had not said before, and was more startling still.

53-57. *Ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life: and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.*

You see here three living persons—the living Father, the living Son, and the living believer, and truly, these three live one life, which comes from the Father by the Son into us, and we are made partakers of the divine nature, according to the apostle’s wondrous language, “having escaped the

corruption which is in the world through lust.” This is a great mystery which only he understands who feels it within himself.

58-60. *This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever. These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum. Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?*

It was not merely the blinded Jews, but even His disciples who did not understand. Now, brethren, the test of a true disciple of Christ is that he is willing to believe what he does not understand. If you will only follow Christ’s words as far as you can comprehend them, the spirit of discipleship is not in you. You are the disciple of your own understanding. Christ is not master, but your judgment is master.

But he that submits himself to the words of Christ, often finds it profitable not to understand. Say you so? How is that? It is profitable to feel that we have come to the end of our own understanding. I have no doubt that a wise father’s talk is good to his children, even though the child does not as yet understand him. He will lay it up in his memory, he will understand one of these days, but the child—the true child’s heart—says, “I believe you, father, though you do puzzle me. You have given me a paradox which I cannot grasp, but I believe you, you are true.” We do say that of Christ, and may we have evermore of that spirit of a little child, without which we cannot receive the kingdom of God.

The other spirit is very rife in the world—the spirit that makes man, virtually, his own teacher. And truly, I wonder not at it, because there was originally so much of submission of the judgment to the dictum of the church, or the dictum of the Pope, which is degrading, but to submit to Jesus and to His teaching—that is ennobling. May we have the same sacredly blind faith with regard to Christ which some have had to human authority, believing everything He speaks. But some of these disciples did not so.

61-62. *When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?*

What will you say then?

63. *It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.*

“You are not to take them as if they were flesh, and understand them carnally. They do but embody My words—do but embody a living soul of meaning, which it will be for you to receive if you are indeed quickened, and then it will quicken you, and you will understand Me, and live in Me.”

64. *But there are some of you that believe not.*

And if they do not believe, then they miss the whole soul of the thing.

64-65. *For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.*

No, not even though he were an apostle—though he came so near to Christ as to pray to Him, and hear His secret and most private communications, and to see His singular and special miracles—yet he would not understand, except the Father gave it as a special act of grace.

66. *From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.*

Did He want them? I trow not. He desired not to have around Him a mass of chaff, but the pure winnowed corn. Consequently He used His own Word as the winnowing fan. And I believe, brothers and sisters, that wherever Christ is faithfully preached, preaching is the best form of church discipline. Somehow or other, carnal minds get weary of it, and they go away, and those that have not a longing and a love for the truth drop off of themselves, so they walk no more with Him.

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